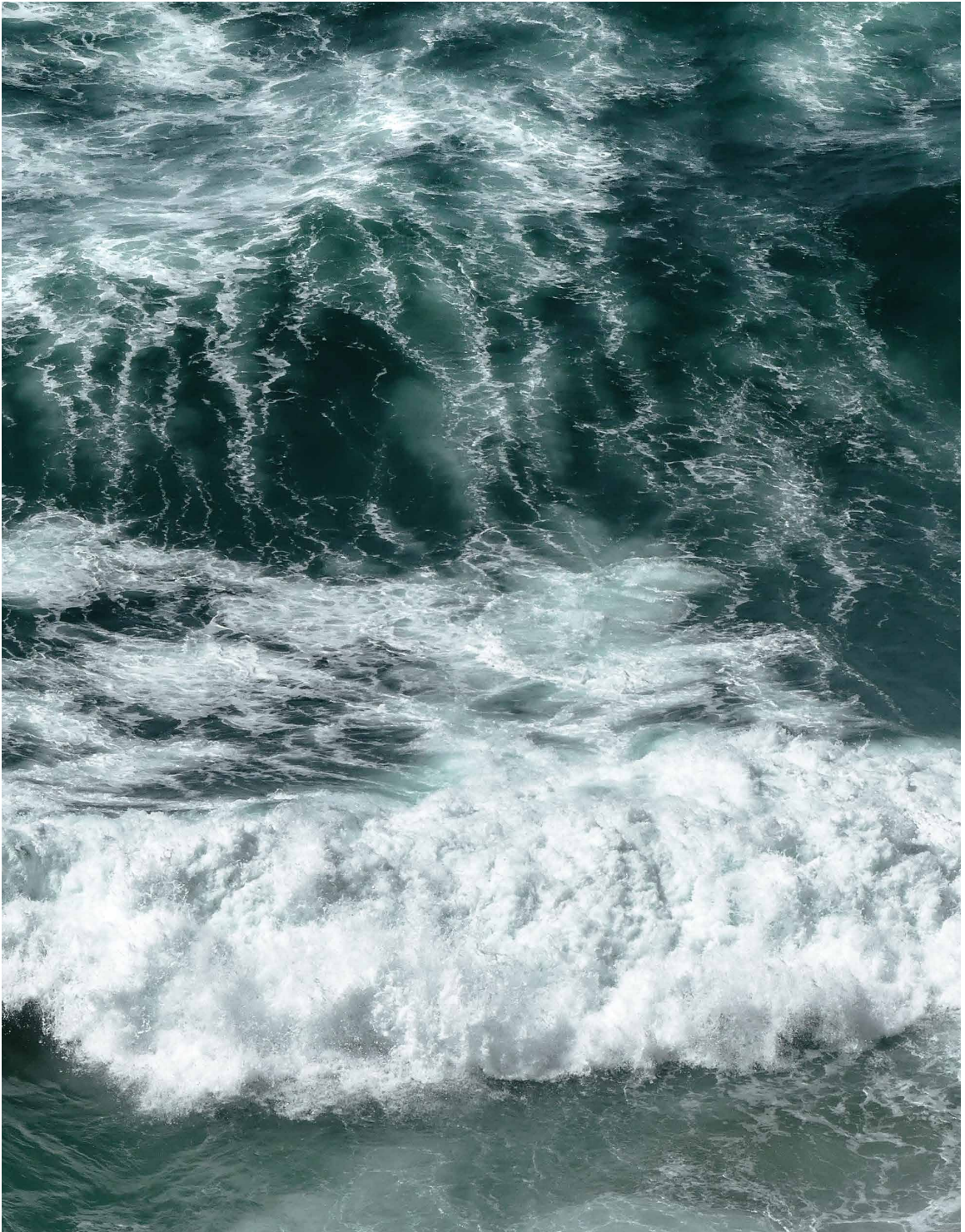


SESSION SEVEN

Fear and Anxiety

PRAYING WITH OTHERS | LEVEL ONE



SESSION SEVEN

Fear and Anxiety

THE DOORWAY

"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind."

— 2 Timothy 1:7

God knew that one of the greatest challenges that we would face in the world is a battle for our peace and in His kindness to us he gave us so many scriptures in the Bible about "not fearing" and about trusting in Him. Jesus made it clear that "in this life we will have troubles" – we will face hard and scary things. Our hope as we minister to people in places of fear and anxiety is that we can help them learn to tune in to the "Prince of Peace" so that they can hear His voice and experience His Presence in the midst of any circumstance. There is something so powerful that can happen as we face our fear and our anxiety in the presence of the Lord! The enemy is a liar and so often the battle is for us to gain God's perspective in a situation so that the enemy can be put back into his rightful place.

**"You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.
You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows."**

— Psalm 23:5

About Fear

Natural Fear

We are all born with two fears—loud noises and falling.

Holy fear, such as reverence for God and "self-preserving fear," which is our body's way to protect us from danger, are good things. It keeps us from running into a street or picking up a poisonous snake.

Spirit of Fear

God gave us fear as a guardrail to help us avoid or escape danger. Satan twists fear to paralyze us. When fear is not our friend, it can give us "spiritual amnesia" and spiritual myopia (short-sightedness). Fear dulls our miracle memory and makes us forget what Jesus has done, how faithful He is, and who we are in Christ. A "spirit of fear" causes us to feel out of control, robbed of joy, in bondage.



Common Effects of Stress-induced Fear

On your body: headache, muscle tension, chest pain, fatigue, change in sex drive, stomach upset, sleep problems

On your mood: anxiety, restlessness, lack of focus, sadness

On your behavior: overeating or under eating, angry outbursts, alcohol/drug abuse, tobacco use, social withdrawal

Common Roots of Unhealthy Fear

Traumatic experiences— see *Psalm 34:4*

Generational fears—see *Philippians 4:6-7*

Overprotection/lack of protection or neglect during childhood—see *2 Timothy 1:7; Deuteronomy 31:6*

How to Overcome Fear, Worry and Anxiety:

1. Identify your fear and root causes. Ask God to reveal it to you.
2. Surrender and give your fears and worries to God.

—From Neil Anderson

What Do I Fear?

We recognize that there are both healthy and unhealthy fears that exist in our lives. We ask the Lord to speak into the unhealthy fears that can enslave us, bind us, control us and erode our faith. One of the first steps is to recognize these in our lives. This tool has been created to help you do that. Prayerfully look at each fear and honestly ask yourself if this is a fear you need to bring before the Lord for healing.

Fear of things that haven't happened yet

PHOBIAS

- Aging/dementia
- Being sexually/physically abused
- Getting a serious illness
- Being trapped in closed spaces
- Becoming infected with germs
- Being in high places
- Not having enough/hoarding
- The dark
- Being alone
- Spiders, snakes, mice, etc.

POTENTIAL DISASTERS

- Loss of job/income/poverty
- Accidents
- Death of someone close
- War, nuclear holocaust
- Receiving bad news
- The unknown
- Your death/effect on others

Fear of making the wrong choices

GETTING TRAPPED

- Never living up to my full potential
- Wondering, "Is this all there is?"
- Missing God's plan for my life
- Living a "dead end" life
- Marrying the right spouse
- Bitterness/blaming
- Focus on missed opportunities

ACHIEVING SUCCESS/ ADMITTING FAILURE

- Feeling your life was wasted
- Focus on performing
- Analysis paralysis/fear wrong choices
- Second guessing one's decisions
- Unattainable dreams/goals
- Feeling defeated/incompetent
- Critical of others
- Overwhelming need to "do"
- Fear of being a bad parent

Fear of truth

FACING MY PAST

- Feeling like a victim
- Blaming
- Guilt/shame/punishment
- "If only" regrets
- Pretending
- Inability to "let it go"
- Fear of being "known"

LOSING MY FAITH

- Paralyzing doubt
- Skepticism/disillusionment
- Ashamed to admit the struggle
- Questioning/uncertainty about God
- Disappointment with God
- Questioning why evil prevails

Fear of abandonment

DISAPPOINTING PEOPLE

- Being controlled by someone else
- Staying in abusive relationships
- Being an enabler
- Accepting blame for other's actions
- Strong avoidance of conflict

BEING REJECTED

- Feeling unwanted/unworthy of love
- Feeling judged
- Lack of trust/betrayal
- Emotionally lonely
- Focus on trying to be "good enough"
- Not being attractive enough
- Wearing "masks" to be someone else

Fear of being vulnerable

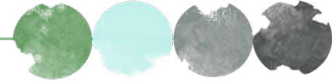
LOSING CONTROL

- Perfectionism
- Manipulative behavior
- Having to be needed
- Intimidation
- Flaunting spirituality
- Controlling others
- Feeling "I am the one to do it!"
- Hates feeling needy/dependent

REVEALING WHO I REALLY AM

- Lacks trust
- Low self-esteem
- Shyness/embarrassment
- Feelings of shame/humiliation
- Focuses on the "if onlys"
- Emotional isolation
- Compulsive behaviors/addictions
- Internal rage

DISCUSSION



From Max Lucado's book, *Fearless*:

"When fear shapes our life, safety becomes our God. And when safety becomes our God we worship the risk-free life." He then goes on to say, "The fear-filled cannot love deeply because love is risky. They cannot give to the poor because benevolence has no guarantee of return. The fear-filled cannot dream wildly. What if their dreams sputter and fall from the sky? The worship of safety emasculates greatness. No wonder Jesus wages such a war against fear!"

Consider the quote at left. Has safety been a God to you?

What does fear and anxiety keep you from?

MINISTRY



Shalom

The Hebrew word shalom is understood around the world to mean "peace." However, "peace" is only one small part of the meaning.

Hebrew words go beyond their spoken pronunciation. Each Hebrew word conveys feeling, intent and emotion. Shalom is more than just simply peace; it is a complete peace. It is a feeling of contentment, completeness, wholeness, healing, well-being and harmony. The shalom of God is His desire to restore and heal all things. It is a holistic view of the person so that they live the abundant life that Jesus promises (*John 10:10*).

In the Bible, the word shalom refers to a blessing, a manifestation of divine grace.

**I release the Shalom of Heaven
over your body, mind and spirit**

**May you know:
love where there is hate.
hope where there is despair.
light where there is darkness.
joy where there is sadness
faith where there is doubt
forgiveness where there is injury.
well being where there is unrest.
health where there is sickness.
May you know peace and be
an instrument of peace.**

—adapted from the St. Francis Prayer



Ministry Time for Fear, Anxiety and Embracing Faith



Listen.

Allow the person to share. What do you listen for?

Love.

Ask clarifying questions and not stories or advice

- *When do you feel anxious?*
- *To what extent has this occurred for you?*
- *What is reasonable and what is not reasonable?*
- *Who is supporting you? (doctor, counselor, friend)*
- *How have you tried to cope?*
- *Do you have a health problems/medications that contribute?*
- *What would your life be like if you were free of this anxiety?*

Name the fear/anxiety and the root cause if you can. If you don't know what it is, ask God to reveal it to you.

Surrender and give your fears and worries to God.

Pray.

Pray exchanges for fear to trust in His love and care.

Helpful Scriptures

Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. —*1 Peter 5:7*

There is no fear in love, perfect love casts out all fear. — *1 John 4:18*

Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life...Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or stow away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can anyone of you by worrying add a single hour to our life? —*Matthew 6: 25-27*

The Lord is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life—whom shall I be afraid?
—*Psalms 27:1*

The Lord is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in him. —*Nahum 1:7*

Guided Meditation

Finding Yourself in Rembrandt's Painting

The Storm on the Sea of Galilee

An interesting thing about the painting is that in addition to the twelve disciples who accompanied Jesus in the boat there is a thirteenth person sailing in the boat. *Who is that?*

Rembrandt is known to have painted himself somewhere in his paintings. He's setting an example for us to find ourselves in the Gospel, bringing to God our stress and our sin, our hurts and our hopes.

In Rembrandt's painting each of the people with Jesus in the boat has their own reaction to the storm. It's something like the different roles that people play in a family, church, or other group. Sometimes, particularly under stress, people's roles and reactions may seem very dysfunctional! Which person do you most identify with? (In different situations or at different times in your life you might find that you have a different reaction.)

On Top

The man in the bow of the ship is on top, riding the huge wave. He's a leader and a professional fisherman who is focused on his work earnestly trimming the front sail. Perhaps it's an adventure for him. Or maybe he's just working hard at his job.

Fixing the Problem

Three of the men (probably experienced fisherman also) are at the mast working frantically to fix the main sail. The gale winds



have ripped it and snapped the metal wire so that the boom is disconnected from the mast.

Your storm might be a difficulty in your family, work, or ministry. Or something personal that you're struggling with. How are you dealing with your personal storm? Which character in Rembrandt's painting do you identify with? Pray quietly about this.

Barely Hanging On!

The huge wave is pounding the man on the left in the middle and he is hanging on to a guy wire for dear life!

Afraid

Most of the crew seem afraid, but especially the man on the right side of the boat. He is crouched over and looking with dread at the enormous wave that is swamping the boat. We can almost feel him trembling with anxiety.

Sick

On the lower left in back is a distressed man with his hand on his forehead and leaning over the side of the boat. It seems he's about to throw up.

Angry at God

Two disciples appear angry at Jesus for sleeping in their storm. One shakes him awake and the other raises his voice, "Teacher! Don't you care if we drown?"

Quiet and Alone

On the lower left of the boat is a man in white that is easy to miss. His back is faced to us. He's sitting still and alone. He seems to be separated from the frightening storm and the chaos going on around him in the boat. There seems to be a shadowy figure that he's looking at. Is he having a vision? Is it an angel?

Lost

A man in a blue shirt on the left side of the boat near the back is standing and holding onto a guy

wire. His other hand is on his forehead as he stares blankly out at the dark sea. Maybe he's flooded with emotion and shut down. It almost seems he is looking to us. He's close to Jesus but he's not looking at him.

Worshiping the Lord

No one is looking at Jesus, except the two angry disciples and the disciple kneeling at Jesus' feet. Only the kneeling disciple is looking at Jesus with trust and reverence. Rembrandt has painted a halo on this disciple's head to signify his faith in the Lord Jesus in the midst of the terrible storm.

At the Helm

There is one more person in the boat with Jesus. In the stern, at the very back, is the disciple at the helm, holding the tiller. He must be another experienced fisherman because he's in charge of the boat. Perhaps this is Peter. He's certainly a leader, like a lot of the pastors I work with—like me! He is responsible to guide the boat's course and instruct the crew on what they need to do. Maybe his hands are tightly gripping the tiller because he's been straining to keep control of the boat? Maybe now he's just holding the tiller because he sees his friend kneeling and his attention has been drawn to Christ the Lord?

Pray About Your Storm

Now, bring your storm into the Gospel story. Some storms that we experience, like this one on the Sea of Galilee are dangerous. Others are storms of stress or not knowing what to do.

RESOURCES

Books

Letting Go of Worry: God's Plan for Finding Peace and Contentment

by Dr. Linda Mintle

Tame Your Fears: And Transform Them into Faith, Confidence, and Action

by Carol Kent

Freedom From Fear: Overcoming Worry and Anxiety

by Dr. Neil T. Anderson & Rich Miller

Fear No Evil: One Man Deals with Terminal Illness

by David Watson

A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23

by W. Phillip Keller

Be Still: 31 Days to a Deeper Meditative Prayer Life

by Amy and Judge Reinhold

Jesus Loves Me: Celebrating the Profound Truths of a Simple Hymn

by Calvin Miller

God is Really Good

by Bill Johnson

Gratitude Journal

Publication of Third Church

Prayer Toolbox

- Fear/Anxiety Scriptures
- Shalom Prayer
- Armor of God

Videos

Take Courage

by Bethel Music [YouTube]



Notes

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing notes, spanning the width of the page.